

**OROVILLE FACILITIES RELICENSING PROJECT  
CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY**

**INTERIM REPORT**

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
License Project No. 2100

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## Introduction

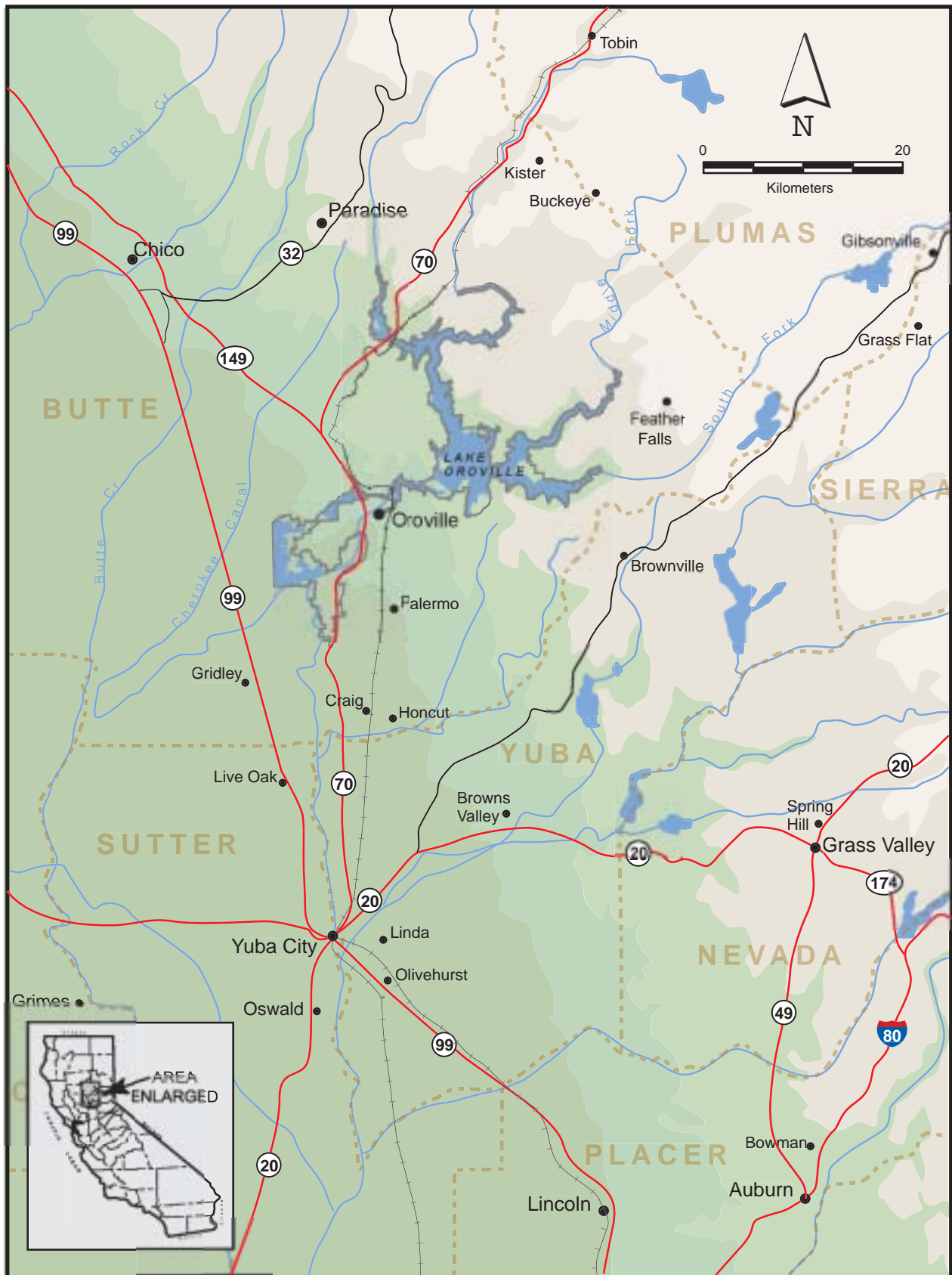
This interim report summarizes the progress of cultural resources inventory studies implemented in support of the Oroville Facilities Relicensing Project ([Map 1](#)). The Cultural Resources Work Group (CRWG) originally identified the need for such studies, followed by approval from the Maidu Advisory Council and Plenary Group in December 2001. The CRWG requested the investigations in order to identify cultural properties that are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and may be affected by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) relicensing application. Accordingly, the inventory effort begins the process of satisfying legal responsibilities of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Investigations are twofold: (1) research and field survey for tangible prehistoric and historical cultural resources and (2) ethnographic research for culturally sensitive places important to the local community. Full reporting of these efforts will be produced in draft by 1 April 2003.

## Cultural Resources Inventory

Research and preparation of an inventory Work Plan commenced in 2001 in anticipation of the study. Fieldwork was carried out between 5 May and 12 December 2002 based on the objectives and methods laid out in the *Cultural Resources Inventory Work Plan for the Relicensing of Lake Oroville, California*, completed and distributed in August 2002 by the Archaeological Research Center, California State University, Sacramento, and the Anthropological Studies Center, Sonoma State University. Professional archaeologists from both universities were joined by Native American coordinators and trainees representing Berry Creek, Enterprise, and Mooretown rancherias in carrying out the study.

The field inventory consisted of five distinct tasks: (1) re-recording known sites; (2) complete inventory of Lake Oroville's fluctuation zone, as exposed during the field season; (3) a probabilistic sample survey of lands outside the fluctuation zone; (4) targeted inventory of archivally sensitive locations; and (5) inspection of management-specific parcels. Specific inventory methods for accomplishing each task are described in detail within the Work Plan cited above.

The 2002 field season stretched over approximately 135 working days, resulting in coverage of approximately 13,000 acres. Exact acreage will be determined in the upcoming months. Approximately 744 distinct cultural resources were identified and recorded during this period. The total consists of 277 prehistoric sites, 402 historic-era sites, and 65 multi-component sites. Prehistoric artifacts were selectively recovered from many of these sites as stipulated in the Work Plan. Laboratory processing and cataloging occurred in Oroville at the field office between November 2002 and January 2003. The goals for each specific field component of the inventory are described below, along with this season's results, followed by the status of the historical research program.



MAP 1. Project Location.

### Re-recording Previously Documented Sites

The Work Plan included a provision for revisiting and updating the paperwork on all known sites within the project area. A cultural resources records search identified 285 recorded sites located within the project area, while information on 7 additional sites was received during the field season as a result of recent Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) studies. Of these, 72 are now located below Lake Oroville's low-water elevation of 640 feet above mean sea level (amsl) or other bodies of water, leaving 220 resources requiring re-recording. A total of 184 known sites were re-recorded; 2 were avoided as they are active cemeteries; another 2 were determined to be outside of the project area; 30 could not be relocated; and 2 are located within the portion of the fluctuation zone that did not become exposed this season.

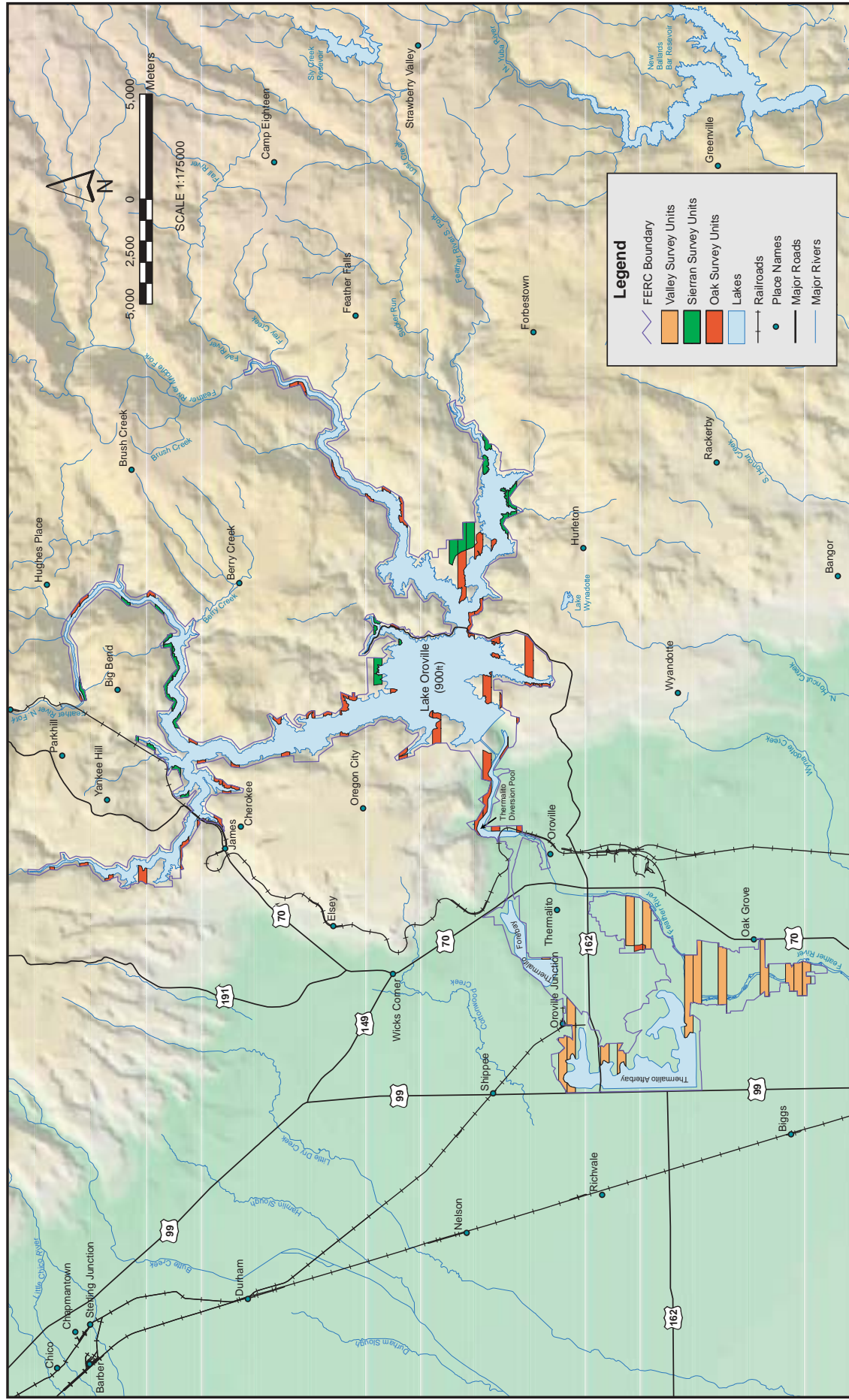
### Fluctuation Zone

The Work Plan called for a 100% survey of the fluctuation zone. Full inventory of this portion of the project area was initiated in August. Logistics focused on balancing the cycle of low water levels with enough time to survey all of the exposed acreage. Water levels reached their lowest elevation of about 690 feet amsl in December, exposing nearly 8,000 acres. Due to the dynamic nature of survey and water-level decline, not all of this acreage could be surveyed. Approximately 7,406 acres of fluctuation zone were ultimately examined this season. Previously recorded sites located within the fluctuation zone were re-recorded as part of this phase.

### Sample Survey

Inventory efforts began with the probabilistic study since lake levels were expected to decrease as the season advanced. Previously recorded sites within or near sample survey blocs were re-recorded during this phase of the inventory. Details of how the sample survey blocs were selected were presented in the Work Plan. The research design called for a 30% sample survey of the 21,410 or so acres above water within the area of potential effect (APE), totaling approximately 6,423 acres. Only 5,449, or 25%, were selected for survey this season, with 5% held aside for future studies once the 2002 inventory results are analyzed ([Map 2](#)).

The vast majority of the survey blocs selected was examined; only two, totaling 58.56 acres, were entirely excluded because of access issues. Another 112.33 acres were determined in the field to be too dangerous to survey. Other survey blocs, totaling 536.74 acres, were only partially examined due to hazardous conditions or access constraints. Ultimately, somewhere between 4,741.37 and 5,278.11 acres were visually inspected by a survey crew. Detailed analysis over the coming months will produce a refined total acreage. Ultimately, the 22 to 25% sample that was completed this season provided the information necessary to understand cultural resources distribution within the APE, especially when considered in light of other survey findings. Final determination will be made over the coming months regarding the need for additional sample survey coverage.





### Historically Sensitive Areas (HSAs)

Initial analysis of General Land Office homestead records and mining plats resulted in the identification and survey of six HSAs that would not have been surveyed under the probabilistic or fluctuation-zone programs. Additional acreage was examined in areas where historic dredge mining and lime production occurred. A total of 846.65 acres were inspected as a result of these studies. Additional survey may be recommended following further analysis of this season's findings.

### Management-specific Parcels

The research design proposed survey of areas that have or will experience direct ongoing impacts related to facility functions, such as operations or recreation. A detailed map of existing impact areas was developed and incorporated into a geographic information system (GIS) this season in order to identify impacted locations that were not surveyed. It is anticipated that these impacted areas will be selected for survey next season.

### Historical Research

In addition to the field survey, archival research and interview programs were carried out this season to assist in the identification and to provide a context for understanding historic-era resources. Historical maps, including mining plats, and homestead information collected to date have been integrated with GIS. Contextual research for specific themes such as gold mining, settlement, and agriculture is ongoing with emphasis presently applied toward report development. Informant interviews scheduled for this phase are complete. A total of 13 people were queried regarding their knowledge of the project-area history. Construction of a master database of individuals' names settling in the APE has been initiated and is ongoing, as it will assist the evaluation of identified historic-era resources. Inventory-level, site-specific historic research is also on-going, combining historical ownership, census data, and mining records information for each historic-era resource in order to acquire information needed to refine and develop appropriate historic contexts; research for about 150 sites, or one-third of the total, is complete. This information will appear on individual site records. Inventory-level development of HSAs is complete and identified locations have been surveyed. All research findings will be analyzed in reference to survey results in the upcoming months.

### Reporting

Extensive efforts have been initiated on the development of a technical inventory report and the high volume of accompanying site records. An outline for this report, to be created in January, will delegate relevant sections to contributors from both Sonoma State University and California State University, Sacramento. It is anticipated that this season's findings will be complete but summarily reported in an abridged fashion given the accelerated schedule of the relicensing effort, calling for a draft to be submitted to DWR by April 1. The site-record appendix alone is anticipated to be well over 2,500 pages. Additionally, a summary inventory report will be made available to the entire Cultural

Resources Work Group, stakeholders, and the broader public. This public document will omit all sensitive data.

Although the fieldwork portion of the inventory study is complete for this season, there remains much work to be carried out between January and April. All of the data collected thus far must be compiled, synthesized, and reported before moving on to the next step of evaluating the eligibility of identified resources for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as required by 36 CFR 800.4. It is also expected that additional inventory will be recommended.

## **Ethnographic Research**

The cultural resources inventory study has also included an ethnographic investigation directed towards collecting ethnohistoric and ethnographic data in order to: 1) identify properties which are important and/or culturally sensitive to the local Maidu community; in the Section 106 process, these properties are termed “Traditional Cultural Properties” or “TCPs;” and 2) to establish a historical context within which to understand the properties. A team lead by Helen McCarthy of Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc. initiated this study in May, and it is currently on-going. The research staff for this investigation includes three members of the local Maidu community, one each from the Berry Creek, Enterprise, and Mooretown tribes.

This study has been carried out in two basic phases. The initial phase, which began in May and is on-going, is comprised of an examination of published and unpublished materials pertaining to the local Maidu peoples. The published materials - ethnographies, articles, and histories - were mainly reviewed in the Butte County Public Library, which has a significant holding of these sources as part of its California Indian Library Project Collection. Other locations of these materials include Shields Library at UC Davis, the California State University, Chico Library, and the California Room of the State Library, Sacramento. Unpublished materials were examined in Special Collections at the California State University, Chico Library which houses the Dorothy Hill Collection, and the Robert Rathbun Collection. Both of these researchers worked extensively with local Maidu community members in the 1950s - 60s and recorded valuable ethnographic data. The Fritz Riddell Collection housed in the California State Archives, Sacramento, was also examined and found to contain a rich data base. The collections developed by these three researchers provide a considerable amount of locational data regarding properties and will thus make important contributions to the cultural resources inventory.

The second phase of the ethnographic study consists of interviews with local Maidu community members; this phase began in September and is currently on-going. Twenty-five interviews have been conducted, involving 19 individuals (some of whom have been interviewed together). Three Elders have participated in 3 interviews, and 2 more in 2 interviews each. There have been 6 field trips into the project area to discuss important locations and their cultural values. A substantial inventory has been developed during these two phases of the ethnographic investigation, and these findings will be

reported on in conjunction with the cultural resources inventory report. Confidentiality of location and meaning will be strictly maintained for all sensitive information. Both interviews and archival research will continue to be conducted as part of the Evaluation stage of this study.

### **Evaluation Studies**

Following completion of the inventory report, a research design will be developed for evaluating the significance of sites identified in the project study area, per Study Plan C2. It is anticipated that an evaluation research design will be submitted shortly after the draft inventory report is complete to allow the time necessary for carrying out this important phase.

Creation of a Cultural Resources Management Plan, the required relicensing document that will guide the management practice and decisions over the life of the new license, will begin concurrently with the evaluation phase.